



# THE FOCUS

## FROM THE PASTOR

### Lenten Discipline

As you are reading these words, the season of Lent has begun. Lent marks 40 days (not counting Sundays) leading up to Easter, and it is a season when Christians prepare ourselves to celebrate the Gospel message at Easter. For many Christians, Lent is known as the time when we give up things like chocolate, TV, or other small things in our lives.

While fasting, or giving up certain things, is certainly an important part of Lent, it can be easy to forget the purpose behind the act. At Lent, we give up things because we identify those things as standing in the way of us drawing closer to God. Some Christians choose to add practices like some forms of prayer or Scripture reading so that they can draw closer to God. At the end of the day, the focus is drawing close to God for Easter, whether by giving up things keeping us from God, or adding new practices to help us in our pursuit of God.

At the time that I am writing these words, we are also in the midst of an extremely bitter political season. I think that there are some practices that we could add to our Lenten Discipline that might help us navigate this time. First, as far as what we can give up, I would suggest we give up anger, hatred, pride, and harmful speech. Just because you disagree with someone as to how America should move forward, understand that most of us are trying to solve the same problems. Insults, anger, and hatred have no place in the life of the Christian, and all Christians should be marked by a humility that is willing to admit that we could be wrong. As far as what we should add, I would point us to the words of Paul: “Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things (Philippians 4:8 NRSV).” Maybe this means giving up news services and social media like Facebook, and replacing them with reading Scripture.

Whatever it looks like, during Lent and during this political season, let’s be people more characterized by Paul’s words and less characterized by the current political world.

*Pastor Jason Stanley*

**ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES** - The United Methodist Church of Marion are holding separate Ash Wednesday services this year on February 26. There will be a 1 PM service at Christland UMC, and a 6 PM service here at Marion First. I look forward to joining with you as we begin the season of Lent.

## HIGHLIGHTS of the FEBRUARY CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING:

1. Pastor Jason is working on Lent and Easter.
2. Repairs on the church with the tucking pointing is in process, they found some crumbling of the inner wall that needs repaired before they can finish.
3. The renewal of the lease agreement on the Annex building was discussed.
4. Also, the roof at the annex is leaking in spots and we will contact roofers for estimates.

Full report of the January meeting is on the bulletin board in the church office hallway

### Church Spending Plan as of January 2020

Monthly	January	Year to Date	
Income	\$11,051.70	Income	\$15,318.63
Expense	\$11,051.70	Expense	\$15,318.63



**BIBLE STUDY** - Our weekly Bible study will begin again during Lent. The Thursday evening group will begin meeting Feb. 27 @ 6:30 P.M. The Wednesday afternoon group will begin the next week, March 4 @ 1:00 P.M. We will be taking a look at worship through a study designed by a group of IWU worship students including our own Christine Stanley, who will be helping to lead the study.



### 2020 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE DONUTS

March—Koninia Class  
April — J.O.Y. Class

**CONFIRMATION/NEW MEMBER CLASS** - Started Feb. 16, we will have a confirmation and new member class meeting Sunday evenings at 5-6:30 P.M. The first part of each class will discuss our baptism and membership vows, and the second part will look at spiritual practices through Richard Foster's book, Celebration of Discipline. There is a sign up sheet in the fellowship hall.

**SHIRTS!!** If you are interested in a FUMC T-shirt, we have some available. They are \$10 each and come in various sizes. Please see Carroll DeVries if you are interested in purchasing a shirt. There are a limited number of shirts in the church office, but we will be ordering again.

**Sunday, March 8**



### UMW NOODLES

We have noodles for sale!  
Just stop by the church office.  
They are \$3.50 a bag.



## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

1	Bill Harris	15	Carolyn Ellis
1	Rick Harris	15	Lauren Morrow
2	Mary Emrick	22	Matt Varner
2	Nancy Worthy	22	Donna Wiley
3	Robert Swathwood	23	Kathy Boxell
4	Linda Simpson	27	Wilma Brookshire
6	Phyllis Springer	28	Laura Kistler
9	Steve Sharon	28	Janet Brauchla
13	Natice Miller	29	Barbara Piper
14	Peg York		



## ANNIVERSARIES

30 Andy & Amanda Varner

**THANK YOU—DEAR CHURCH FAMILY,** Thank you so much for your generous gift at Christmas. It was deeply appreciated. Also, I can never thank you enough for your support and kind words over the last 18 years or so. Hopefully, I will be around for a few more. God Bless You! *Susan Seacott*

**RETIRING** - Rev. Ed Fritz retirement at Annual Conference, retiring clergy are recognized for their years of service. Rev. Ed Fritz is among the clergy retiring this year. In order to let the clergy know how appreciated their service has been, the Conference is collecting pictures, cards, thank you notes, letters, etc. If you would like to show Rev. Fritz your appreciation for his years here, bring these items into the office, and we will get them sent to the Conference.



## Preschool Postings

It never ceases to amaze me how fast the school year goes by. We only have about 10 more weeks of school left. I put up some new pictures this week from the beginning of the year. I can't believe how much the children have grown and matured in the short amount of time we've been in school. We have lost two but gained two new ones, so we are at the six children mark again. We have a couple of children that stay all day and 2 children that leave just before lunch time. We are finally getting into our new routine.

We are getting in a few visits to the Library, when the weather cooperates. The children ask every week if we are going to the Library, I wish I could hold their attention like the Librarian does. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that she reads to them once a month instead of every day. After our stories and a movie on the wall, we visit with the fish and the guinea pig, Arlene. Arlene is a favorite, as long as she is in the cage. Sometimes when Megan is with us she asks to hold Arlene, the children aren't too sure about petting Arlene when she's out of the cage.

We are getting ready to have a couple of fundraisers. We have scheduled Applebee's Dine to Donate for Wednesday, March 11. The preschool will receive 15% of all sales made accompanied by a flyer. Look for flyers in the bulletin.

We are also doing a Concannon's Flavored Popcorn and Pretzel fundraiser during the month of March. Orders will be turned in on Friday March 27<sup>th</sup> and be back the around April 2. The exact date will be announced later.

Please help us out with these fundraisers if you are able. If you are unable to participate and know someone who can, let them know, As always, we could use lots of prayers. We appreciate the support given to FUMC Preschool through prayers and fundraisers.



First United Methodist Church  
624 S. Adams St.  
Marion, IN 46953

**March 2020**

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

***Making disciples of Jesus Christ  
for the transformation of the  
world.***

**THE NEXT FOCUS DEADLINE**  
March 18, 2020

PASTOR—Jason Stanley  
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ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT— Rita Forsythe

ORGANIST— Susan Seacott

PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR— Donna Wiley

CHURCH PHONE — 765-664-5177

Email: [info@marionumc.org](mailto:info@marionumc.org)

[www.marionumc.org](http://www.marionumc.org)

**H O P E**

*Receiving Hope*

*Living Hope*

*Sharing Hope*

**SERVICE TIMES**

MORNING WORSHIP— 9:15 A.M.

SUNDAY SCHOOL— 10:30 A.M.

YOUTH GROUP— 6:00 P.M.